

# Andrew Pudewa Lecture #1: Cultivating Language Arts - Preschool through High School

For PPT pdf, email [info@iew.com](mailto:info@iew.com), [andrew@iew.com](mailto:andrew@iew.com)

## Introduction

- Language Arts: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing
  - Schools focus on Reading and Writing because it is assessable, and less so on Listening and Speaking
  - Listening → Speaking
    - A child's spoken vocabulary is entirely dependent on what they have heard
    - As they get older, they might read a word (sound it out), guess how to pronounce it and maybe infer its meaning
  - Listening → Reading
    - Children cannot read and understand words they haven't already heard
  - Speaking ↔ Reading
    - When children start reading, they have to verbalize (and then hear what they said) and that's how they learn
  - Speaking → Writing
    - To write something, you must first have an idea
    - Ideas can pre-exist as memories or imagination ("write about your trip"), or about the present physical reality ("write about this room")
    - Ideas can pre-exist in words ("write about the tower of Babel" - you learned this from words, not from senses), or in sensory impressions ("write about your dog" - you have to recall the memories or emotions or experiences)
    - You have to "speak" the idea into existence
  - Reading ↔ Writing
    - Read what you wrote and edit/proofread/modify
- To cultivate one of the four language arts, you actually need to improve all of them

## Preschool

Age 3.5-5.5 +/- 1 year

- Listening
  - Music
    - Tonal Sensitivity and Patterns

- Attentiveness (attentive to what I'm familiar with or what I expect e.g. in a piece I've heard several times)
- Joy (when what you expect to happen, happens - joy!)
- Stories and Reading Aloud
  - Repetition is the key
  - When a kid wants to keep reading the same book day after day
    - Each day they are understanding a little bit more from it
    - Affection for it and familiarity to it
    - Sparks of joy when they expect something to happen and it happens
    - One day they will stop getting something new out of it, they know it well enough, they will move on
- Conversations
  - Children will overhear conversations of the adults
  - Youngest child usually has the best vocabulary understanding because he grew up in a more language rich environment (with all his siblings and parents)
- Minimal Technology
  - **Visually** hyper-stimulating (so less attentive to the auditory)
  - 100% Negative
- Speaking
  - Teach them simple poems and songs (e.g. nursery rhymes)
    - Moving words from passive vocabulary (I've heard it, I know what it means) to active vocabulary (I say that word, I use it, I own it)
    - The Restoration of Christian Culture by John Senior - "You have to grow up on Mother Goose to fall in love with Willy Shakespeare"
  - Self-talk
    - Children, left to themselves, often talk to themselves
    - Imagine being in a place that says "sit down and don't talk" - you're saying "turn off your brain"
  - Imagination
    - Vocabulary and Memory → Imagination
- Reading
  - Pushing reading too early can actually have the opposite effect (resentment)
    - Zero correlation with academic success
  - Reading with ears
    - When their parent reads them a book
  - Overhearing higher level books
- Writing
  - Natural
  - Drawing
  - Holding utensil
  - Simple spelling

## Primary

5.5 - 8 +- 1 year

- Listening
  - Music, stories, books
  - Increase attention span
    - They can listen for longer periods of time
    - They can even close their eyes while they listen
    - They can use books that have less pictures (i.e. not on every page) - this forces some imagining of the thing
  - Minimize technology
- Speaking
  - Poetry, Prayers, Scripture
    - Memorized verses and prayers
  - Narration (Charlotte Mason - read books about her)
    - Give the child an opportunity to tell back from their experience (e.g. to tell you the process you went through to make the cookies, let them narrate back the story they heard - move words into active vocabulary)
  - Dictating Stories
- Reading
  - Phonics for decoding
    - Sounding out words
    - Use a program you like because you will teach it better
  - Increase sophistication
  - Literature via audiobooks
- Writing
  - Letter formation
    - The right way to write each letter
  - Simple Copywork
    - Builds stamina
    - High level ideas flowing through brain and to paper
  - Spelling (verbal & written)
    - Don't stop doing verbal spelling (and mental math)

## Elementary

8-11 +/- 1 year

- Listening
  - Same as Primary
- Speaking
  - Continue narration
  - Memorize and Recite Poetry
  - Drama
  - Contests
- Reading
  - Continue audiobooks
  - Create abundant opportunities for reading
  - Read aloud to your parents or siblings

- Writing
  - Basic composition
  - Spelling program
  - Grammar, Latin

## Middle School

- Listening
  - Take notes from a sermon, lecture, speech, talk, etc.
- Speaking
  - Poetry, famous speeches
  - Contests (4H, NHD, etc.)
  - Impromptu, debate
- Reading
  - Classics
  - CS Lewis' rule
    - Read an old book for every new book
  - Continue oral reading
- Writing
  - A lot of writing
  - Contests
  - Grammar, Latin
  - Logic

## High School

- Integration
  - Speech and debate and mock trial
    - Research
    - Organization
    - Positive culture
    - Teamwork
    - Learning to “go deep”
    - Events/Tournaments
    - Confidence
  - Logic, rhetoric, socratic discussion
    - Not standard HS Curriculum
    - Thinking syllogistically
    - Liberal Arts = “real education”
    - Appreciation of great books
    - Discussion: listening, questioning
    - Learn with students
  - Drama and Musical Theatre
    - Memory
    - Teamwork
    - Polish
    - Confidence

- Motivation
  - Joy
  - Varied Responsibilities & Roles
  - College (Dual Enrollment, AA Degree)
    - Rigor (not so hard)
    - External accountability
    - Still at home
    - Save \$\$\$
    - Adult “real” world
    - Class options
    - Safe/okay to drop
    - Confidence
    - Transferrable credits
  - Teach Younger children
    - Learn best!
    - Choose your favorite thing
    - Planning, responsibility
    - Income
    - Service to community
    - Great on resume
  - Start a business
    - “Real world”
    - Integrates skills
    - \$\$\$ Maybe
    - Family Entrepreneurial
    - Thinking
    - Resilience
  - Community Involvement
    - Internships
    - Campaigns
    - Volunteer
- 

Revision #2

Created 2026-06-25 18:05:23 UTC by Morcous Wahba

Updated 2026-06-25 19:43:08 UTC by Morcous Wahba